

"TAKE NOT COUNSEL OF YOUR FEARS"

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"As time went by we built the mythology of the Minute Men even further. We depicted them as a small but courageous band of farmers who responded to a spontaneous call to arms, an untrained and poorly armed rabble. The truth, of course was very different. There were actually 14,000 colonials under arms in the militia and Minute Man regiments. They were alerted by organized alarm riders via a system that dated back to the 17th century wars. They had trained intensively for a year and were armed with the same type weapons as the British. Lexington was an important battle in the history of the United States, not only because it was the opening moment of the war that created our country but also because it provides us a microcosm of the drift to war-- with all the tensions, the misinterpretations, the fears and the posturings, the courageous and the foolish acts that augur the clash of arms."
-- General John R. Galvin, "THE MINUTEMEN", 1989, Pergamon-Brassey Press.

As I write this, "Triple Ought" is 16 days away. On the internet and over the fax, phone and radio nets that make up the "alarm rider" system of those who love the Constitution and the Republic, messages full of what Shakespeare called "alarums and excursions" are reverberating. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has succeeded in finding some weak-minded fools to maneuver into "conspiracies" great and small to try to prove the thesis laid out in their paranoid millennial conspiracy theory term paper dubbed "Project Megiddo." That the FBI, whose underwear was so recently pulled down around its ankles by Mike McNulty's new Waco documentary, should attempt to change the subject by making cases against "militia maniacs" is hardly surprising. What is surprising is the reaction to these events by heretofore level-headed constitutionalists who have thereby concluded that the sky is falling, the "roundup" is beginning, martial law is around the corner, and that King William the Worst of Arkansas' coronation is not far behind, which we will all watch on "1984ish" video monitors from our cells in internment camps.

Now I have not been on the Internet for some months (much to the relief of some I'm sure), but our unit monitors the message traffic there. Keyboard commandos, professional rumor shadowboxers and Chicken Littles aside, it remains a vital means of sharing information between Constitutionalists. But I have not opted out of the Constitutional militia movement this year. On the contrary, I've been spending my time training my unit and getting it ready to fight-- we call it "The Three B's", beans, bullets and boots in the grass, training.

Since July we have expended thousands of rounds of blank ammunition and legal pyrotechnics in fire and maneuver field training exercises (FTXs), based on the Marine Corps' rifle company (thirteen man squad/four man fire team) organization. At no time have we broken even one law, even though Alabama has an anti-paramilitary training law. Our recruits are impressed early on with the fact that we run an entirely legal unit, and felons need not apply. Convinced of the superiority of aimed, semi-automatic rifle fire, we have no need for explosives or automatic weapons. We make no ridiculous offensive contingency plans based on defeatist nonsense: our legal charter as well as our historical patrimony defines us as the premier defensive tool of the armed citizenry against either disorder or a tyrannical federal government. We are not a private army, nor could a politically-motivated federal prosecutor successfully misconstrue us as one to a candid jury. During this time we have picked up many new recruits, even as some of the older members fell by the wayside once they realized from the training that their mouths had been writing checks their bodies might actually have to cash. The recruits, by the way, far outnumbered the drop-outs.

And as we have honed our military skills, I have noticed in my officers and troopers (men and women) as well as myself a growing confidence. Competence promotes confidence, just as preparation prevents panic. "Train like you fight," a grizzled Marine veteran once told me, "and you'll fight like you train." Indeed, we train more often than the average National Guard unit, and our morale, motivation and esprit is higher by far. In one training weekend, we expend more rounds (blank and live) than does the average Guard unit in summer training. When we conduct live fire exercises, we hit what we aim at.

More importantly, every time we go to the range, every time we cruise a gun show or a gun shop, we run into members of other units just like ours. Morris Dees has pronounced the militia movement to be dying. Well, my Constitutional Militia movement is doing just fine, sorry 'bout his. While it remains more difficult than in the heyday of militia organization in '94 & '95 to find a public militia unit, there remain many, many non-public units. The Alabama First has never held a public meeting, yet we grow by ever-expanding contact with friends and neighbors. And, much as I predicted years ago, events continue to mobilize recruits for us. That is why we practice as a cadre organization-- when mobilized we will flesh out with many volunteers who will be lucky to serve in fire-teams and squads commanded by ex-privates of the First who actually know what they're doing.

"But even when the level of training reached its lowest ebb, late in the 1760s, the militia troops still practiced their marksmanship, and handling of weapons remained important. There developed an easy-going familiarity with weapons, something that can be best described as the Rogers influence: care of the weapon and marksmanship received attention, and sham battles (Rogers' favorite training) took place at every muster....In the fall of 1774 the picnic atmosphere disappeared

from troop exercises and the men began to train in earnest...These men knew they might soon be facing the regulars on the battlefield, and they did not intend to be scoffed at this time. Would there be time enough to form the militia and minute men under new officers and prepare them to stand against the regulars? Luckily the provincials were not starting from scratch. They possessed two important assets which were to be of immeasurable help in the coming months: the minute man concept, which was well understood by all the soldiers, and.....a heavy distribution of combat veterans from the French and Indian War." Galvin, Ibid.

Our unit is organized along the minute man concept, with every trooper's subsistence pack and combat harness loaded and ready to go. We also train neighborhood self-defense organizations, as well as security detachments for churches with food distribution programs for Y2K (anyone with overseas missions experience understands that food programs need security precautions, hungry Americans would doubtless be less orderly than starving Ethiopians, having had no prior experience with want). We stand ready to assist our local sheriff with search and rescue or posse duties. Whatever the duty required, we are ready. This willingness to share our acquired expertise has the added effect of broadening our base of support in the community. Thus we do not view local and state law enforcement as our enemies but rather as our natural allies. And those law enforcement officers who have come in contact with us are undoubtedly more skeptical of the Feds than they are of us. We are simple, law-abiding and direct.

This does not mean that we will have the luxury of remaining "law-abiding" forever, at least in so far as Janet Reno would define "law-abiding." We stand right on the line of current federal gun laws. As much as we might believe that every federal gun law since the National Firearms Act of 1934 is unconstitutional, we concede we came too late to the game to do anything about them. However, if the Feds move the line behind us, past where we now stand, we will not back up. They know, because I have announced it in every public venue I can, that if they make me a criminal, I intend to be a very good criminal. The same kind of criminal, in fact, that King George III considered Patrick Henry to be, and for much the same reasons.

Indeed, all of us must be prepared for the day when we are faced by Feds on our own property who intend us harm. We must presume that they intend us harm because in truth they have never renounced the Waco "rules of engagement." And if they did, why should we believe them if they have not brought the Waco criminals to justice? The fact is, they have not and will not, so we must assume that Waco Rules still obtain. Therefore, if they come in the night, dressed in Gestapo black, to carry out some bogus warrant, I will defend myself and take as many of them with me as possible. Only in this way will such vermin ultimately be discouraged. We will be fighting, if forced to it, for our lives, our liberty, and in the case of Christians such as myself, for our immortal

souls. The Feds will be fighting for the right to live to draw their retirement from their socialist nanny state. Who do you suppose will last the day?

The Federal leviathan is fearsome, no doubt, but remember that even on our worst day, we still have them surrounded in overwhelming numbers. And if we know it, so do they.

In the early days of the Battle of the Bulge, which began 55 years ago today, the 82nd Airborne Division was rushed into the battle area to help contain the northern axis of the German advance. Upon arrival at the forward edge of the battle area, members of the veteran 82nd, which had been resting from the bloody disaster of Operation Market Garden, were manning a road block watching the broken remnants of other divisions stream by. One of these refugees called out, "Who are you guys?" Came the reply: "We're the 82nd Airborne, and this is as far as the SOBs are gonna get."

Remember that no matter how successful the federal push for gun control seems to be, no matter how much of a minority we now seem to be in our own country, we're still the Constitutional Militia of the United States of America, and this is as far as the SOBs are gonna get.

So now is not the time to be discouraged. It is not the time to be faint of heart. It is not the time to lose touch with the reality in front of our faces. As my old Baptist preacher was fond of thundering when I was a lad, "Take not counsel of your fears!"

And I have a treatment for what ails our movement. I prescribe it as a palliative that I myself have taken regularly. It is a dose of courage better than a double of Bushmill's Irish Whiskey: TRAINING.

Do you want to dispel your doubts and fears? TRAIN.

Do you want to grow your unit? TRAIN.

Do you want to discourage the Feds from unconstitutional actions? TRAIN.

Do you want to convince your friends and acquaintances of your competence and your convictions? TRAIN.

Do you want to be a true citizen soldier as the Founders expected you to be? TRAIN.

Do you want to live through the opening days of the civil conflict you fear is almost upon us? TRAIN.

If you are a Christian like me, you are commanded not to fear your own death, but rather to live your life so that your death is a homecoming.

We must not seek our own death, but neither are we to fear it. In truth, I have found prayer to be a great comfort and help. But praying AND training is better still.

So take not counsel of your fears. We face an enemy less overwhelming than did the Founders who fought at Lexington, Concord and Breed's Hill.

Of the latter battle, an historian later wrote:

"Something else, something entirely intangible and perhaps not even recognizable at the time, had occurred on June 17, 1775. Men who were not fighters by trade or inclination had stood side by side behind their earthworks and their fences and had waited calmly while some of the most formidable fighters in the world advanced against them in ordered ranks. They had not run from artillery fire, they had stood up to the wild terror of a bayonet charge, and they had broken only when their ammunition gave out and they could fight no more. A few months earlier the odds against the success of any American military effort would have been overwhelming; the regular army was an object of dread, not to be tested. Now Americans had met it face to face, and like a figment of darkness suddenly exposed to the light, it could be seen for what it was-- an army that commanded great respect, but one composed of men no taller or stronger than any others. By demonstrating that some ordinary American farmers had stood against this formidable enemy, the battle of June 17 proved, as nothing else could, that others might accomplish the same thing. Had they failed, it is just conceivable that the rebellion might have sputtered out." -- Richard M. Ketchum, DECISIVE DAY: The Battle for Bunker Hill, 1962, Anchor Books.

They were ordinary farmers to be sure, but they were trained militiamen as well. They did not fail, and neither shall we. For in the end we, like they, are Americans-- a free people like none other on the planet-- we invented the constitutional republic. And if we fail to preserve liberty in this country there is no place to run, and no place to hide. We cannot fail, so we must train.

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